



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Navajo Nation welcomes UCSF HEAL
Initiative health care workers to the Navajo Nation**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer speaking with Dr. Sriram Shamasunder at Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, N.M. on April 24, 2020.

GALLUP N.M. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer had the honor of welcoming a team of UC San Francisco health care workers from the state of California, who arrived to the Navajo Nation on Thursday to begin a one-month voluntary assignment to provide urgent health care support for COVID-19 patients at hospitals located in Shiprock, N.M. and Chinle, Ariz. on the Navajo Nation, and Gallup Indian Medical Center near the Navajo Nation.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer met with Dr. Sriram Shamasunder, co-founder of UCSF HEAL Initiative, which is a two-year fellowship serving health care workers who are committed to working with disadvantaged rural communities around the world. 49 health care workers in Navajo Nation are current fellows or alumni of the fellowship.

“The Navajo people are truly grateful for the compassionate and hard-working medical team members from UCSF, who are already on the ground in our communities helping COVID-19 patients, under the leadership of Dr. Shamasunder. The UCSF is truly a blessing for the Navajo people and I’m sure their work will save many lives,” said President Nez.

The program, which includes physicians who have completed their medical residencies, as well as health care workers including physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, and pharmacists, representing the communities in need, is the largest U.S. global health fellowship – 128 people have completed or are currently participating in the international program.

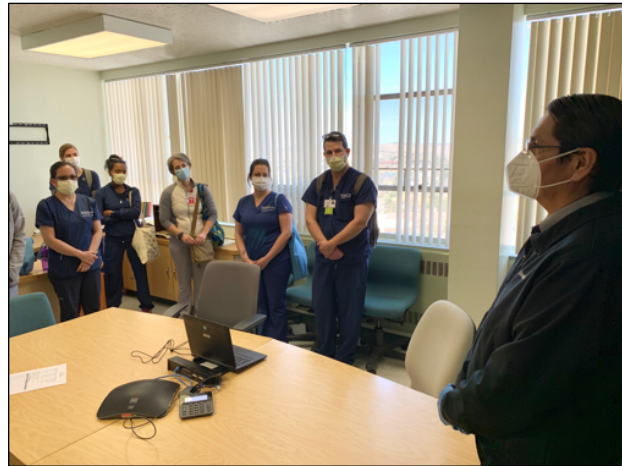


PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez speaking to UCSF HEAL Initiative members at Gallup Indian Medical Center in Gallup, N.M. on April 24, 2020.

“We are so honored to serve on this sacred land, at the invitation of President Nez and Navajo leadership. For five years our global health program, UCSF HEAL has worked closely with Navajo frontline health leaders such as Dr. Adriann Begay and Dr. Paula Mora to care for Navajo patients. In this moment of crisis, we know more than ever, we are interconnected and interdependent. This is the reason we have sent 21 doctors and nurses from UCSF. Solidarity is a verb, a practice and more infectious than the virus. We are grateful to be in solidarity with Navajo leadership and Navajo people at this time,” said Dr. Shamasunder.

“More than ever, we need strong partnerships and this is truly a blessing to have the UCSF HEAL team in our communities to help COVID-19 patients. They are also helping to relieve our Nation’s own health care workers who have been working long days and nights helping our own people – them we say thank you as well! We are pushing hard every day and we will get through the COVID-19 pandemic together,” said Vice President Lizer.

A total of seven physicians and 14 nurses will be working in teams of seven in hospitals in Chinle, Ariz., and Gallup and Shiprock, N.M., three of the highest volume hospitals serving Navajo patients.

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